

## FACTORS INFLUENCING OFF-SEASONAL MIGRATION OF HILLY TRIBES IN TIRUVANNAMALAI DISTRICT

S. VASANTHAPRIYA<sup>1</sup> & M. ASOKHAN<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology,  
Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore, India

<sup>2</sup>Deputy Registrar, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore, India

### ABSTRACT

*The present research was framed to find out the factors which influence the off-seasonal migration of hill tribes in Tiruvannamalai district. Among the 32 districts in Tamil Nadu, Tiruvannamalai district was selected purposively for this study since it is one of the districts, where the migration of hilly tribes were found high. The study was conducted in seven villages, namely Kovilur, Nammiyampattu, Kanamali, Veerappanur, Melsilambai, Palamarathur and Kuttakarai from Jamunamarathur block of Tiruvannamalai district. The sample size consisted of 240 respondents selected from these villages by proportionate random sampling method. The respondents were interviewed personally by a well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule. The statistical tool percentage analysis was used to analyse the collected data. The findings were meaningfully interpreted and relevant conclusions were drawn. In this context, the push and pull factors which influence the off-seasonal migration of hilly tribes were discussed.*

**KEYWORDS:** Hilly Tribes, Off-Seasonal Migration, Factors of Migration, Tiruvannamalai & Jawadhu Hills

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### INTRODUCTION

The word migration is derived from the Latin word migrate; meaning to change one's residence. Migration from one area to another area in search of improved livelihoods is a key feature of human history. Migration is today a worldwide phenomenon and has become a boon and a curse to humans (Sundari, 2007). The landless poor who mostly belong to lower castes, indigenous communities, i.e., tribes and economically backward regions constitute the major portion of migrants. In the very large tribal regions of India, intrusion of outsiders, settlements by the outsiders displacing the local tribal people and deforestation also played a major role in migration (Dwivedi, 2012).

As long as the tribes have access to resources generated from the forest, they have no difficulties in satisfying their basic needs. In turn, they have an interest in preserving the forest, as it is their life support system, but large scale industrialization, urbanization and exploitation of natural resources due to deforestation to meet the urban and industrial demands has greatly affected the livelihood pattern. This trend has been responsible for displacing large number of tribes from their habitation (Nathan and Xaxa, 2012; Singh, 2012). Agriculture is a seasonal occupation, which cannot open job opportunities round the year to all. The majority of the agricultural labourers, small and marginal farmers do not get enough work during the off-season, consequently, they migrate from insufficient food and limited sources of geographical areas to job opportunities area. Therefore, it is said that agricultural labourers and other workers are migrating from drought prone areas to irrigated and industrially developed areas for part-time work or seasonal types of jobs (Dwivedi, 2012). Seasonal migration does not only occur with external factors, perpetuating tribal poverty. A balanced relationship between migration and natural resources were found to be actual features of tribal lifestyle. A

safety valve which activated the tribal communities were seasonal migration for the purpose of finding the necessary resources elsewhere for the tribes to survive. Alongside migrations, as a consequence of late rains, there were lowering daily wages and growing vulnerability towards contractors or corruption practices in due course. (Report of Inter-Agency Regional Analysis Network, 2016). The two principal factors - the push and pull factors are responsible for migration. The push factors are poverty, lack of work opportunities, unemployment underdevelopment, poor economic condition, lack of opportunities, exhaustion of natural resources and natural calamities, scarcity of cultivated land, inequitable land distribution and low agricultural productivity, etc. Pull factors attract migrant to an area (area of destination), like employment and higher education opportunities, higher wages facilities and better working conditions. The appalling living conditions, like slums, lack of safe water, absence of sanitation, overcrowding with the attendant increase in crime, insecurity for women, sexual abuse and exposure to frequent epidemics were the immediate outcome of the population shift (Bala, 2017). Anamica (2010) observed the pull factors responsible for migration, namely low income level (93.33%), small land holdings (86.66%), debtness (35.56%), lower wages (34.44%), frequent crop failure due to aberrant monsoon (23.33%), discrimination or inequality (13.33%) and unemployment or lesser employment (11.11%), whereas pull factors, namely better standard of living (75.56%), higher wages (68.69%), better infrastructure facility (25.56%), better social linkage (23.33%), work with less drudgery (20.00%) and safety and eco-friendly environment (10.00%). Humanitarian Foresight Think Tank (2016) report revealed that stretching or disrupting traditional patterns, population growth and intensifying weather-related disasters (drought in particular) result in increasing migratory movements, and in less people benefiting from this positive deviant behavior.

With this background, the study entitled “Factors facilitating the off-seasonal migration of hilly tribes” was studied and the results were further enumerated in the results and discussion part to answer the question that-

What are all the push and pull factors which influence the off-seasonal migration of hilly tribes?

Based on this question, the hypotheses framed were:

**Null Hypothesis:** There is no effect of push and pull factors on the off-seasonal migration of hilly tribes.

**Alternative Hypothesis:** There is an effect of push and pull factors on the off-seasonal migration of hilly tribes.

## METHODOLOGY

Tiruvannamalai district in Tamil Nadu was purposively selected because it is one of the districts in Tamil Nadu where the percentage of migrating hilly tribe population is high. Jamunamarathur block was selected because it has maximum number of hilly tribe population in Tiruvannamalai district and then Kovilur, Nammiyampattu, Kanamali, Veerappanur, Melsilambai, Palamarathur and Kuttakarai were the villages selected for the study where the percentage of tribal population is high. The research design chosen for this is ex-post facto research design with an objective to list out the factors facilitating off-seasonal migration of hilly tribes. The lists of tribal residents were obtained from the records of the village administrative officers. Proportionate random sampling procedure was employed in selecting 240 respondents from the selected seven villages. A sample of 65 members from Kovilur, 44 members from Nammiyampattu, 35 members each from Kanamalai and Veerappanur, 23 members from Melsilambai and for remaining 38 members, 19 members each selected from Palamarathur and Kuttakarai. The data were collected using a pre-tested interview schedule. The interview schedule used for this study was subjected to judges' opinion obtained from various research scientists of Tamil Nadu and other states of India. The mean score, based on the calculation obtained, was used to select indicators used to study the socio-economic impact of off-seasonal migration of hilly tribes. Further, the interview schedule was pre-tested with the non-sample area of the study. After contacting the respondents, the

collected data were subjected to statistical test to get the meaningful interpretations.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Factors Facilitating Off-Seasonal Migration

Factors are causes or reasons for the migration of hilly tribes in the study area. An attempt was made to collect the push and pull factors facilitating the migration of hilly tribes during the off-season. The results on data collected were presented in tables 1 and 2 below.

### Push Factors

Push factors are those in their old place which force people to move to other places. The list of 17 push factors which facilitate the hilly tribes to migrate for income generation activities to other areas were enquired with the respondents and the results obtained were depicted in table 1 below.

**Table 1: List of Push Factors which Facilitate the Off-Seasonal Migration of Hilly Tribes**

Sl. No.	Push Factors	Number	Percent
1.	Small land holdings*	209	87.10
2.	Land degradation*	38	15.80
3.	Water scarcity for agriculture/Monsoon failure*	240	100.00
4.	Low resource availability*	236	98.30
5.	Less job opportunities*	238	99.20
6.	Peer pressure/Family situation*	232	96.70
7.	Desire to achieve*	49	20.40
8.	Mono cropping*	0	0.00
9.	Debt*	234	97.50
10.	Crop failure*	240	100.00
11.	Unstable income*	240	100.00
12.	Low credit facility*	238	99.20
13.	Less infrastructure and market facility*	223	92.90
14.	Social discrimination*	203	84.60
15.	To earn more money*	237	98.80
16.	Social amenities*	200	83.30
17.	Labour problem for agriculture*	24	10.00

\*Multiple Responses

The results depicted in Table 1 explains that cent (100.00%) per cent of the respondents opined that factors which pushed the hilly tribes were water scarcity for agriculture/monsoon failure, crop failure and unstable income from agricultural practices. It is verified that when there is no water available for agricultural practices, the failure of the crop will occur and hence the livelihood of the hilly tribe farmers who mainly depend on agriculture will not get stable income. Further, it significantly forces the hilly tribes to migrate for the off-season to do economic activities outside the locality to obtain additional income.

Majority (99.20%) of the respondents revealed that less job opportunities and low credit facilities forced the hilly tribes to migrate outside the society to earn additional income from other allied activities during the off-season. The profession of agriculture is mere gambling with all external environmental factors and the possibilities of facing uncertainties are very high. It is also difficult to estimate the hopeful amount of income from agriculture. This would have directed the hilly tribes to move towards other areas where the income is reported to be promising and regular. Around 98.80% of the respondents represented that the hilly tribes migrate to earn more money from off-seasonal activities to improve the livelihood status of the family. The hilly tribes borrow money from illegal source of money lenders with high cost of interest and hence the tribes have to repay the amount with interest on the mentioned date or otherwise the hilly

tribes face the consequences very badly and hence the money earned from the off-seasonal migration activities would help the tribes to repay the debt obtained from those money lenders.

About 98.30% of the respondents opined that low availability of resources for additional income generation activities at the locality directed the hilly tribes to migrate to other areas to do economic activities. Subsequently, it was noted that the hilly area consisted of comparatively less sources than the plain area, and the tribes were in need to do economic activities during the off-season for the sustainable livelihood and this influenced the hilly tribes migration to better resource available area to earn additional income. Exactly, 97.50% of the respondents stated that the hilly tribes migrate to earn additional income to repay the debt availed for the seasonal agricultural activities at the locality. For every common person, there is an interest to earn additional income by doing economic activities in the leisure time period and this quality in the hilly tribes also played the major factor for off-seasonal migration. The peer pressure/family situation acted as the main push factor for 96.70% of the respondents to migrate to other areas to obtain additional income to fulfil the family needs. The tribes were notified as backward classes of the society. The existing situation of the tribe's environment will not favor the tribes to develop economically and socially. Some parts of the tribes were getting aware to be equal with other society people socially, culturally and economically. Mainly, the family situation enforced the tribes to migrate and hinder other tribes to develop strong bonding in the society. This might have caused the tribes to involve in off-seasonal migration. Nearly, 87.10% of the respondents possessed small land holdings which would have directed the hilly tribes' move towards other income generating areas where regular income is obtained. Around 84.60% of the respondents expressed that social discrimination in the study area was found to be the key factor for migration. Even though the tribal community was mentioned as backward, economically sound people were also found within this community. The disparities in the society due to socio-economic conditions of the hilly tribes made migration the choice to relieve those from discrimination for some time during the off-season and also to attain better socio-economic conditions on par with the developed society. Majority (83.30%) of the respondents reported that social amenities acted as the push factor for the hilly tribes to migrate outside the society to earn additional income to create a worthy profile to gain social recognition. Since the tribes will not get the chance of selling the produces directly to the market, as the middle men interventions are predominant and the tribes are unable to get a good price for the produces due to lack of interactions with other society people at the hills. This triggered the hilly tribes to opt for the plains and get familiarized with other people's activities. Exactly, one-fourth (20.40%) of the respondents opined that the desire factor to achieve, motivated the hilly tribes to migrate to other areas to learn additional skills and to accomplish better than the economic activities done by other hilly tribes. The tribes lack social, economic, educational and health aspects. To get themselves empowered, the hilly tribes have to learn more skills from outside the society. The tribes have to merge or mingle with other society's activities and thus the tribes learn and utilize to achieve better in life. Less than one-fifth (15.80%) of the respondents said that land degradation affected the crop production at the study area and thus resulted in off-seasonal migration of hilly tribes. As a result of developmental works carried out at the hilly area, the nature of the soil gets changed and affects the land cultivation. This resulted in local crops' yield reduction cultivated by the hilly tribes who fetch to earn for the family in addition to the off-season striving by the hilly tribe respondents to migrate to other areas to do better economic activities and to fulfil the family needs.

Around one-tenth (10.00%) of the respondents responded that labour problem for agriculture pushed the hilly tribes to migrate outside locality. This occurred due to migration of other hilly tribes who worked in other hilly tribe's land and hence their migration forced the land owner to quit agriculture during off-season. This enabled some of the land owners to move towards other regions to obtain income during the off-season. None of the respondents were found to migrate because of monocropping followed

by the hilly tribes in the study area since the tribes in the hilly area do not get to choose the same crop for all the seasons due to the climatic conditions and topography of land. Also, the unavailability of seed for sowing the same crop for all the seasons played a major reason that the hilly tribes do not choose to follow monocropping. Though monocropping was not followed but the income obtained from varied cropping pattern was not sufficient for the hilly tribes to meet out the daily needs. The research findings of Anamica (2010) and Anamica (2013) were in a similar magnitude where the foremost push factors were insufficient income from agriculture and less job opportunities in the villages.

### **Pull Factors**

Pull factors are factors in the target or destination place which encourage people to move. These include peace and safety, a chance for a better standard of living in general as well as political and religious freedom. The list of 18 pull factors which facilitate the hilly tribes to migrate for income generation activities to other areas were enquired with and the respondents and the results obtained were depicted in table 2 below.

**Table 2: List of Pull Factors which Facilitate the Off-Seasonal Migration of Hilly Tribes**

Sl. No.	Pull Factors	Number	Percent
1.	Better jobs*	239	99.60
2.	Pollution free environment*	8	3.30
3.	More wages*	234	97.50
4.	Improved healthcare facilities*	4	1.70
5.	Better standard of living*	5	2.10
6.	Availability of good infrastructure facilities*	4	1.70
7.	Opportunities for savings*	4	1.70
8.	Opportunities for investment*	2	0.80
9.	Safety and security for family*	1	0.40
10.	Better education for children*	0	0.00
11.	Skill acquisition*	9	3.80
12.	Better social linkage*	4	1.70
13.	Access to government institutions*	1	0.40
14.	Better source available for farming*	0	0.00
15.	Opportunity for self-employment*	3	1.20
16.	Various sources available for leisure activities*	2	0.80
17.	Additional income*	220	91.70
18.	Availability of credit facilities*	8	3.30

\*Multiple Responses

A glimpse from Table 2, majority (99.60%) of the respondents revealed that better job opportunities available outside the society made the hilly tribes to make a move for migration followed by the majority (97.50%) of the respondents, who agreed that more wages could be earned through activities carried out during off-seasonal migration. The economic pull factors of more wages and availability of better jobs in urban areas are closely interlinked with economic push factors like low level of income from agriculture, smaller land holdings and frequent crop failure. The desire to achieve a better standard of living and the intention to take over work involving less drudgery has also attracted a considerable number of the hilly tribes to polarize towards industrial premises in metropolitan areas. Around 91.70% of the respondents exhibited that additional income obtained from the economic activities at the migratory place helped the hilly tribes to repay the debts borrowed for seasonal agricultural activities. The additional income obtained with the off-seasonal activities will be used for future home and farm development activities by the hilly tribes. Less than one-tenth (3.30%) of the respondents expressed that pollution-free environment and availability of credit facilities acted as the pull factors for migration to other areas. The hilly area was not affected by pollution due to other people's intrusion into this area. Developmental issues in the Jawadhu Hills like road for transport facilities, construction of development offices buildings at the locality and reduction in the forest cover might have

pushed the meagre portion of hilly tribes in search to stay for some period in pollution-free environment during the off-season.

Very meagre per cent of the respondents stated that better standard of living (2.10%), improved health care facilities (1.70%), availability of good infrastructure facilities (1.70%), opportunities for savings (1.70%), better social linkage (1.70%) and opportunities for self-employment (1.20%) acted as pull factors for off-seasonal migration of hilly tribes. To avail better standard of living from the opportunities utilized at the migratory place, the hilly tribes learn to migrate for the off-season. Majorly, tribes used to follow traditional health care practices but for major diseases, the tribes have to depend on allopathic treatment for faster and immediate recovery and this might act as pull factor that improved health care facilities and avail the benefits of the migratory place. The hilly tribes' houses were built with mud walls and thatched roofs and enjoyed the stay with good infrastructure facilities at the migratory place during the off-season without any payment afforded by the migrant hilly tribes and this pulled the hilly tribes to adore the off-seasonal migration. Due to migration, the hilly tribes have had the chance to meet the people from varied culture and society and better social ties made with other communities also creates a strong bond among the tribal community which influenced the hilly tribes to make a move over migration during off-season. The farm skill and the non-farm skill learnt during the off-season at the migratory place provides added support for the hilly tribes to do innovation in the farms and generate self-employment from the learnt skill by using various resources available at the migratory place. A negligible portion of respondents reported that opportunities for investment (0.80%), variable sources available for leisure activities (0.80%), safety and security of the family (0.40%) and access to government institutions (0.40%) were found to be pull factors for off-seasonal migration of hilly tribes since the tribes were not much aware about the investment in other developmental areas and savings habit, where those factors do not play a major role as the pulling power for migration. The tribes also do not show interest towards leisure activities since the hilly tribes are more traditional and it hinders to focus on other activities except those of economic interest and the progress in hilly tribes' motivation to migrate and get access to government institutions for personal and societal development. Very meagre portion represented that the off-seasonal migration was carried out to provide safety and security for the family since the money lenders might provide problems to the family members during the respondents' migration period and to protect the family members from those difficulties, the hilly tribes migrate along with the family members for safety and security purposes.

Nobody represented the pull factors that provided better education for children and better source available for farming, as the reasons for off-seasonal migration. Due to off-seasonal migration, many dropouts from schools were found. Though the tribes knew about the importance of education, the hilly tribes will not show interest towards getting more education for the betterment of life. Since the tribes were not from an economically sound profile, the tribes will not get opportunities to afford and take over the farming by own or by lease at the migratory place. So, both these factors did not act as the pull factors for the off-seasonal migration of hilly tribes. The research findings of Anamica (2010) and Anamica (2013) was focused similarly, where the foremost pull factors were better jobs and more wages available in migratory places.

## CONCLUSIONS

Migration is a form of spatial mobility of population between one geographical unit and another involving a permanent change of residence. The study reveals that majority of the hilly tribes stated that push factors played a major role for the off-seasonal migration comparatively than the pull factors which were mentioned. From these results, to prevent migration, necessary steps to be taken by the concerned state department for the tribal welfare and state department of agriculture to improve the livelihood status of the tribes by giving remedies for the problems arise with the agricultural practices through construction of water storage facilities for agriculture, effective water management practices to the hilly tribes, supporting agricultural practices by supply of

required inputs, providing employment opportunities during the off-season to get stable income and other necessary livelihood facilities such as transport, market, hospital, etc., to the hilly tribes in the study area will develop the livelihood status of the hilly tribe which leads to drastic reduction in the migration of hilly tribes to other areas in search of economic generation activities. All basic amenities like roads, electricity, safe drinking water, health facilities, job opportunities in business and service sectors should be developed by the government in the hilly tribe area. Since the research was confined to the Tiruvannamalai district of Tamil Nadu, the findings are likely to be generalized for similar areas only and the focus of this study was on off-seasonal migration of hilly tribes alone and therefore the findings cannot be generalized for other kinds of human migration which was the limitation of this study. The suggestions offered for future research from this study and a similar study on other hilly areas, comparative analysis on hilly tribes and plain tribes towards migration may be considered.

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## AUTHORS PROFILE



**S. VASANTHAPRIYA** (corresponding author) is a doctoral research scholar in Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore. She got her bachelor degree in the discipline of Agriculture (B.Sc. – Agriculture) with 83 per cent in Tamil Nadu Agricultural University for the year 2009-2013. And she did her post-graduation in the discipline of Agricultural Extension (M.Sc. Ag. in Agricultural Extension) for the year 2013-15. The OGPA obtained on post-graduation was 9.30 (93.00%). The research study on Socio-Economic impact of little millet cultivation among tribal farmers was chosen for her post graduate research work. Now she is doing her doctorate programme in the discipline of Extension Education at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University. Awarded with UGC-OBC National fellowship for the year 2017-18. She has published seven research articles in various journals. She has got the Scientist Associate Award in GRISASS, 2015. She has participated in six conferences and got the best poster presentation award in AGSC 2016 from TNAU. Her area of specialisation in research was tribal studies. She got OGPA for her Ph.D. in Extension education was 9.32 (93.20%). In addition, she has passed both English and Tamil typewriting higher grade with first class. She also has proficiency on c, c++ language software and completed Computer on Office Automation (COA) course. She is a member in the Extension Education Society, TNAU, Coimbatore and SADNA.



**Dr. M. ASOKHAN** is working as Deputy Registrar (Affiliation) in Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore. He has a vast knowledge and experience in teaching and research with the specialisation on agricultural extension. He started his career as an assistant professor and attained the one of the major respectable designation in the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore. His area of specialisation is group dynamics and social change. Now he has been a part of Co Project Investigator four different research projects funded by various organizations in India. He has published 10 articles recently from the year 2015-2018. He has guided more than 10 M.Sc. students and 5 Ph.D. Research scholars in Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology. For the past two years he has published six books from various publishers in the topics of participatory technology, development programmes in agricultural extension, dynamic of social change, extension methods, rural sociology and gender livelihood. At present he is the vice-president of Extension Education Society, TNAU, Coimbatore. He organized the International conference on invigorating transformation of farm extension towards sustainable development: Futuristic Challenges and Prospects (INTFES-18). And committee member in the 17th International Tamil Internet Conference. He is also offering guidance for the research students both post graduate and doctorate research scholars in agricultural extension. He is now guiding two post-doctorate fellows in specialisation with tribal studies from Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology, TNAU, Coimbatore.